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THE REAL ST. NICHOLAS

The veneration with which St. Nicholas has been honored in both the East and West, the number of altars and churches erected to his memory, and the countless stories associated with his name, bear witness to something extraordinary about him. It is said that there are more Orthodox temples of worship dedicated to St. Nicholas than to any other saint. Yet, the one fact concerning the life of St. Nicholas of which we can be absolutely certain is that he was bishop of Myra in the fourth century.

According to tradition, St. Nicholas was born at Patara, Lycia, a province of southern Asia Minor, where St. Paul had planted the faith. He was well brought up by pious and virtuous parents, who set him to studying the sacred books at the age of five. His parents died while he was still young, leaving him with a considerable fortune, which he resolved to use for works of charity.

It happened that Nicholas was in the city of Myra when the clergy and people were meeting together to elect a new bishop. God directed them to choose him. This was at the time of the reign of Diocletian, whose persecutions, while they lasted, were waged with great severity. As the leader of the Christians, Nicholas was seized by the magistrates, tortured, then chained and thrown into prison with other Christians. He was released when Constantine assumed the imperial diadem of the Romans.

Twenty years after this, Nicholas was present at the Council of Nicea in 325, which was called by Emperor Constantine to refute the Arian heresy, which had permeated the church. According to one tradition, Nicholas became so angry that he

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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



We can receive no greater assurance than those we receive from the words sung over and over again at the beginning of the Christmas Eve Compline. "God is with us; understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!" These words are sung over and over again. "Snami Boh razumite jazitci, i pokarjajtesja, jako Snami Boh!" Beautiful music has been written for these words the choir sings the response "For God Is With Us!" as the soloist chants the verses.

In liturgical books this hymn is referred to as the Hymn of Prophet Isaiah as it is based on the 8th and 9th chapters of the book of Isaiah. Isaiah made a prophecy when Ahaz, the king of Judah, showed a lack of faith in the promise of God made to David, through the prophet Nathan, that his kingdom would remain strong forever. Ahaz put greater faith in human power than in the Divine protection of the chosen people. He tried to combine the two, thinking, "What harm is there in asking for help from another ruler?" Isaiah wrote that human power would fail but the Lord God would conquer

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GOD IS WITH US

In a fourth century sermon at Christmastime, St. John Chrysostom preached: "What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of Days has become an infant. He who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infant's hands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation (be) the measure of His goodness."

Amen! Well said. No wonder St. John was called Chrysostom the "Golden-mouthed!

The Christmas story, rightly understood, should fill our hearts with praise. First, we see many Old Testament prophecies fulfilled. Isaiah had foretold the virgin birth of the Messiah (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14).

Micah had said His birthplace would be Bethlehem (Matt 2:6; Mic 5:2).

Hosea had spoken of a time in Egypt (Matt 2:15; Hos 11:1).

Jeremiah had foreseen the horrifying violence of Herod (Matt 2:18; Jer 31:15).

And various prophets had indicated the Messiah would be "despised," or in Jesus' day, the equivalent of being "called a Nazarene" (Matt 2:23; Isaiah 53:3).

We also rejoice because God intervened in miraculous ways throughout the Christmas story. Jesus was born of a virgin – somehow, the Holy Spirit engineered His conception outside of

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CHRONOLOGY

DECEMBER 2006

DIED: METROPOLITAN VITALY, former first hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in Mansonville, Canada at the age of 97.

PANI DOLORES HADZUDA

PANI ELIZABETH SIMKO

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CONGREGATION IN ICELAND has given a plot of land by authorities, free of charge, on which to build a new church. The land is in Reykjavik, the capital.

ST. TIKHON'S CENTURY CLUB will hold its 12th annual Winter Festival on Sunday, January 28 at Genetti Manor, 1505 South Main St., Dickson City, PA. Hors d'oeuvres at 3 p.m. with dinner at 4. Tables of eight may be reserved. Join friendly people for an evening of fun, food and fellowship prior to great-Lent. For info: St. Tikhon's Century Association, c/o Mary Sernak, 700 Delaware St., Mayfield, PA 18433 or phone: 570/876-5755.

UNIFICATION should take place in 2007 between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). ROCOR is expected to be a self-governed branch of the Moscow Patriarchy retaining its autonomy in terms of pastoral, educational, administrative, economic, property and secular issues. Meetings of both groups are still being held to settle remaining controversies.

THE OLD GREEN STAMPS, Top Value Stamps and Gold Bond Stamps you have tucked away in a drawer can still be redeemed. Customer service number is 800-435-5674 and 800-625-1331.

AT A MEETING OF THE JOINT CATHOLIC-ORTHODOX theological commission held in Europe recently, the Russian Orthodox Bishop Hilarion of Vienna lodged a protest saying that Catholics must not impose their model upon the Orthodox world concerning the Patriarch of Constantinople being the worldwide leader of the Orthodox faith. The Orthodox have a model of autonomous churches and while the Patriarch of Constantinople is "first-among-equals" it does not correspond to the See of Rome and the late Primacy of the Pope.

WHEN POPE BENEDICT held a public Mass in Munich, Germany, a crucifix was seen above him which was identified as a 1100-year-old crucifix from the church in Enghausen, Bavaria. It was said that it is regarded as the oldest life-sized depiction of Jesus Christ in the world. Jesus' feet are depicted side by side in the Orthodox tradition rather than crossed at the ankles usually seen on crucifixes of the Western Church.

ALL PROFITS FROM THE SALE OF GREETING CARDS go for shoes for orphans in Eastern Europe. Christmas and other cards are available from Troika Cards, 8 Summit Rd., York, PA 17403-4914. For info on prices, single sets or wholesale go to rogandel@yahoo.com

UNTIL THE U.S. AIR FORCE MEMORIAL was dedicated recently in Washington, it was the only military branch without a memorial near the capital. Located on a promontory next to Arlington Memorial Cemetery it consists of three 270 feet spires which imitate vapors from jets shooting upward from the earth and peeling away from each other. This evokes the famed Thunderbirds' "bomb-burst" maneuver.

AN AUCTION WAS HELD at the farmhouse of Jack Palance which contained items from St. John Byzantine Catholic Church in Hazleton, PA, which had been torn down. Among the items sold were ikons and candlesticks from the church. Palance, whose name was Vladimir Palahniuk, is of Ukrainian origin.

A COLLEGE CONFERENCE sponsored by Orthodox Christian Fellowship, an inter-Orthodox ministry, will take place from December 27-31. For info visit www.ocf.net

SCHOLARSHIPS are available to orthodox students of the SCOBA jurisdictions. Applications and guidelines for the Katina John Malta Scholarship will be available after January 1 from the Office of the Chancellor, Scholarship Office, 10 East 79th St., New York, NY 10021. Application deadline for 2007 is April 15. Applications are available online at http://www.goarch.org/en/archdiocese/administration/chancellor/maltascholarship.pdf

ROAD TO EMMAUS, P.O. BOX 16021, Portland, OR 97292 in 2007 will feature accounts of pilgrimages to rural Russia and Iona, Scotland, discussion on hell and heaven with a Moscow parish priest, Greek prisoners to faith, etc. This quarterly can be obtained for $25. For info call 1-866-783-6628.

AN ORTHODOX PRIEST was beheaded in Iraq in October following Pope Benedict's Regensburg speech. Fr. Boulos Iskander's relatives received a demand for $350,000 in ransom and demands that the Syrian Orthodox Church in Mosul issue a rebuke to the Pope. Although negotiations with the kidnappers were being carried on, Father Boulos' brutally dismembered body was discovered.

EVERY STATE has low-cost or free medical healthcare coverage for uninsured children through either Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Covering Kids and Families. Call toll-free to see if children are eligible 877/543-7669.

PATMOS, where St. John the Evangelist wrote the Book of Revelations, has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Monument. It will include a centre equipped with audiovisual displays in five languages and a touchscreen info-kiosk with info on Patmos with links to Internet sites with content related to Orthodox culture worldwide.

(Continued from front page)
THE REAL ST. NICHOLAS

slapped Arius. He was deprived of his episcopal insignia and imprisoned. But Our Lord and His Mother appeared to several bishops in a dream showing Jesus giving back a gospel to Nicholas and the Virgin returning his bishop's stole/omophor. The bishops restored his liberty and his office.

He was buried in his episcopal city of Myra. Two centuries later, his feast was celebrated and a church was built over his tomb. In 1034 Myra was taken by the Saracens. His relics were taken to Bari, Italy in 1087 where a church was built to house them. So many Russian pilgrims came to Bari, Italy in Czarist times that the Russian government maintained a hospital, a church and a hospice there.

As the song to St. Nicholas asks "O kto, kto Nicolai lubit." "O who, who loves Nicholas." From the number of icons of him, from the number of churches named for him, and for the many people bearing his name – it would seem that many love him.

(Continued from front page)
CHRIST IS BORN

through His Emmanuel. Emmanuel is a Hebrew word for the Messiah which means "God is with us - Snami Boh" (Matthew 1:23).

The message of Christmas is "Christ is Born! God is with us!" Is it any wonder we respond: "Glorify Him"?

(Continued from front page)
GOD IS WITH US

normal means (Matt 1:18). Angels, who are God's messengers, delivered several special announcements. And how did the Magi know where and when to come to find the newborn King? God was clearly at work in their knowledge, the star they followed, and in the dream, warning them not to tell Herod.

Most of all, in celebrating this Holy Day, we worship the Son of God, who for our sakes became man. Why did He do it? To save us from our sins "for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet…" (Matt 1:21,22) Why did He do it? To show God's love to the world and to bring light to all people – after all, the Magi were foreigners, And to become "God with us," a phrase which we hear over and over again in the services of the Church at this season. A phrase that succinctly captures the mystery and wonder of the Incarnation. (Matt 1:23)

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50 YEARS AGO

On the front page of the December 1956 issue there is a sketch of St. Herman's Chapel, which was built across the road from the house which the church had for the use of retired clergy. These were located on a road now named St. Tikhon Road in So. Canaan, PA. The chapel was to serve a future American Monastic Order. Upon its completion, all services were in the English language. This was a project of Fr. Gennady, who is now in a nursing home in Waymart, PA, and Brother George (Udics), now deceased. Many people donated items and labor for the completion and furnishing of the chapel. The property is now owned by Robert Roth, who volunteers his time at St. Tikhon Seminary Library.

Archbishop Nikon presented a full report on the activities in Canada. A pilgrimage was held at Sifton Monastery the same as is held at St. Tikhon's Monastery in the U.S. The choir from Moose Jaw won second prize at a Festival of Choirs, great gains in membership were noted in Edmonton, an Orthodox Civic Center was dedicated in Chagar, Smoky Lake celebrated its 50th anniversary, a new parish was started in North Bane and the church building in Bonneyville was being remodeled.

Bishop Ireney of Japan celebrated his 40th year since ordination. He was happy to report that 23 families he sponsored were granted visas to leave Harbin, China and move to Japan. There were eight new students enrolled in the seminary, making a total of 26. Many of these were college graduates. Three hundred six adults and 62 children accepted Orthodox Christianity from July 1955 to July 56.

Two new records were released by the New York City Cathedral, directed by Prof. Afonsky. The archives of the church in Alaska were sent to the Library of Congress in Washington to be placed in fireproof vaults. The parishes of Holy Virgin Mary in Los Angeles, CA, SS Innocents parish in Encino, CA and Holy Ghost parish in Bridgeport, CT provided scholarships for men entering one of the two Orthodox seminaries. A total of 38 students were enrolled at St. Vladimir's Seminary. College students were encouraged to form Orthodox Christian Fellowships on their campuses.

An article on Bishop John of San Francisco's 30th anniversary since he entered monastic life at Mount Athos included facts about his life – leaving his life of royal glory to serve God.

From Alaska – a column dealt with the background of Fr. Sergius Irtell and more fully described his work since arriving in Alaska.

Editor's Notes made mention of the need for unity of Orthodoxy in America. "We cripple our own influence and hobble along on the makeshift crutches handed to us by well-intentioned but poorly informed people."

Boh predvicnyj narodivsja.
Prijsov dnesj iz nebes,
scoty spas ludsvoj vesj
i utisiv vsja.

VViflejemi dnesj Marija Precista
Porodila u vertepi nam Christa:
Slava vo vysnich Bohu,
Slava vo vysnich Bohu,
i mir vsim na zemli.

SOBORNOST

Later Eastern Councils

Following the East-West Schism, local councils continued to be held throughout the Orthodox world. Always, the local synods convened as per canon law (unless prohibited by the Moslems). Some "local" councils of the East gained their place in history. Some of the more famous are listed below.

In 1341 and 1351, two Councils of Constantinople convened and ratified the position of Gregory Palamas, canonized in 1367, on the Hesychast teaching. They affirmed the monks' experience of the "divine and uncreated Light of Tabor," which Gregory argued was possible by distinguishing between the essence and the energies of God.

Six local councils (1638-1691) condemned the Calvinistic **Confessions** of Patriarch Cyril Lukaris of Constantinople. In response to this heretical text, two other "confessions" of the Orthodox Faith were written in the 17th century. The Council of Jassy (in Romania), held in 1642, approved the **Orthodox Confession** of Peter Mohila (but only after it had been revised by the Greek scholar Meletius Syrigos, because it was based on Roman Catholic manuals). The 1672 Council of Jerusalem ratified the Confession of Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who answered Cyril's teaching point by point with clarity and conciseness.

A local Council was held in Constantinople in 1819, affirming the teaching of Nicodemus the Hagiorite. This monk of the "holy mountain," canonized by the Eastern Church, advocated the frequent reception of Holy Communion at a time when most Orthodox communicated only a few times a year. Movements which are trying to re-establish weekly Communion today appeal to the great authority of Nicodemus and this council.

Other synodical pronouncements of note by local councils of the Byzantine Church include: the Reply of the Orthodox Patriarchs to Pope Pius XI (1848); the Reply of the Synod of Constantinople to Pope Leo XIII (1895); and the Encyclical Letters by the Patriarchate of Constantinople on Christian Unity and on the "Ecumenical Movement" (1920, 1952).

Fr. Michael Dahulich, PhD
Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary
South Canaan, PA

Church Quiz

Circle the correct answer.

1. Christmas or the Nativity of Christ is the most important Holy Day in the Orthodox Church. (True / False)
2. Christ was born with two perfect natures – Divine and human – as God-man. (True / False)
3. When we say in the Creed that we believe that Jesus was incarnate, we mean that He suffered for us. (True / False)
4. The icons on either side of the double doors on the inconastas are of Jesus and the Mother of God. (True / False)
5. We as Orthodox believe that Holy Communion is a symbolic re-enactment of the Last Supper. (True / False)
6. The Gospel Book on the Holy Altar contains the whole New Testament. (True / False)
7. St. Nicholas Day on December 6/19 is one of the 12 main Holy Days. (True / False)

ANSWERS:

1. False. Easter or the Resurrection of Christ is the Holy Day of Holy Days.
2. True. He is both God and man.
3. False. Incarnate means that He took on a human body.
4. True. The double doors are called royal doors.
5. False. We believe the bread and wine is truly the Body and Blood of Christ.
6. False. The book only contains the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
7. False. The 12 main Holy Days are feasts of Our Savior, Jesus Christ or His Mother, the Birth-Giver of God.

WINTER'S GRACE

Thousands of thoughts dart through our minds every day. Have you ever tried to examine all those thoughts? Where do they come from? What are they focused on? You will soon realize how many thoughts you do have and how distracting they could be to the work you are trying to do.

You will begin to realize how these thoughts affect your emotions, your actions, and therefore your life in general. Although your thoughts have generated a vast range of emotions – from fear to discontent to happiness – for many anxiety is the most dominant feeling they experience.

If this describes you, you may need a change. Your peace of mind is being stolen from you. You find that you aren't trusting in the Lord's faithful love and His constant presence in your life. If you don't want this to continue, rather than allowing yourself to dwell on your anxious thoughts, say a short prayer to the Lord. The Jesus prayer is perfect: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." You will continue to struggle, but more and more you will gain victory over your anxiety and other unpleasant thoughts.

"Come, O faithful,
let us see where Christ was born!
Together with the Magi,
the Kings of the East,
let us follow the star where it goes."
(Christmas Matins, Tone 4)

Prepare O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all!
Adorn yourself, O Ephratha for the Tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave.
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the fruit divine.
If we eat of it we will live forever and not die like Adam.
Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning.

(Tropar for the Prefeast)

BIBLE QUIZ

1. This prophet, who posed much of his book in the form of questions and answers, concluded that "they just shall live by faith."
2. This false prophet wore a yoke, which Jeremiah broke.
3. This unlucky prophet delivered an unfavorable message to King Ahab.
4. This travelling companion of St. Paul was considered a prophet.
5. This man is spoken of as being his brother's prophet. He is also famous for having constructed a golden calf.
6. This false prophet was a sorcerer and an attendant of the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus.
7. This evil prophetess is referred to in Revelation by the name of an Old Testament queen.

ANSWERS:
1. Habakkuk
2. Hananiah (Jeremiah 28)
3. Micaiah ben-Imlah (1 Kings 22:8-28)
4. Silas (Acts 15:32)
5. Aaron (Exodus 7:1)
6. Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:6-11)
7. Jezebel (Revelation 2:20)

Memories

Velija (Holy Supper) was the only time we ate in the dining room. All the other times we ate in the kitchen. We knelt around the table by our plates and my father said the special prayers. We didn't eat everything off our plates; we were supposed to save something for the poor. Sometimes I would forget and my mother would give me a little more so I could eat just half of it and leave the rest. Then we'd go downstairs to the basement to play. Santa would ring the doorbell and by the time we came up the stairs, he'd left gifts under the tree. We were still fasting, but we'd get bags with oranges and nuts and we could eat that. When we got older, we'd go to church for the service.

When I was small, I could hardly wait for the time to come. We would bring benches in to seat all the children around the table. You could just feel the holiness in our house with Mom and Dad. You just felt the birth of Christ come alive that night. You just wished that the night would never end. I now have Holy Supper for all my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. After Holy Supper, we sing the "Tropar" and Silent Night and then the little children sing Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

Our parish tried a new idea last year. We created a special booklet with Advent prayers that we are praying together at 7 each night. It's heartwarming to think that within the many homes of our parish we are praying for each other in a special way this Advent season. Whatever we choose to do to prepare for the holidays this year, may it lead us to a richer experience of God's love for us.

On Christmas Eve there would be no electric lights in the house; as the children would look toward the sky for the first star of the night, that would be a sign that we could start our Christmas Eve meal. That symbolizes the star over Bethlehem. We would put straw under the dinner table to represent the manger. Parents hide coins and candy in the straw. Now we celebrate both Christmases. My family looks forward to celebrating Christmas on January 7 because it's a religious experience, and all the commercialism of December 25 has passed.

What I remember most about Christmas Eve was how clean everything was. We bathed and put on clean clothes, even if it were in the middle of the week. The house was clean and smelled of lemon oil, which we had used to polish the furniture, mixed with the fresh green pine smell of the Christmas tree, mixed with the warm comforting smell of the special food cooking and baking in the kitchen. The table in the dining room on which we did our homework had a white ironed starched tablecloth, which our mother kept in her cedar chest. We hardly ever ate in the dining room, so everything made us quiet and in awe. We knew and felt something special was happening.

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LIGHTER MOMENT

It was Christmas and the judge asked the defendant "What are you charged with?"

"Doing my Christmas shopping early," replied the defendant.

"That's no offense," said the judge. "How early were you?"

Before the store opened."

Divnaja novina:
nyni Diva syna.
Porodila, Viflejemi,
Marija jedina.

Nova rados stala
jaka ne byvala
nad vertepom zvizda jasna
svitu za sijala

Nebo i zemla, nebo i zemla
nyni torzestvujut.
Anhely lude, anhely lude
veselo praznujut:
Christos rodivsja,
Boh voplotivsja,
Anhely spivajut,
carije vitajut,
pastyr ihrajut,
poklon Mu otdajut,
cudo, cudo, povidajut

Tajna nam sja javila,
Diva Syna zrodila.
Nebesa, nebesa, nebesa
slavl 'at, slavl 'at

Editor's Notes

How wonderful that in the Russian Orthodox tradition we greet each other at Christmas and the week following with the good news that "Christ is Born," and we receive the response to this earth-shaking news: "Glorify Him!"

What do we mean by telling someone to "Glorify Him?" It means that we should honor or praise Him in our thoughts and with our words.

I wish you, my readers, many of you have become great friends although I have never met you, time to express gratefulness to God and to declare His greatness. In doing both, we will together "Glorify Him."

In marriage counseling couples are told that in their life together, they will not always agree; but when they do argue, they should "Never strike below the belt." That is fight fair, don't say anything which will be hurtful to the other person. If it must be said, frame it in a non-hurtful way. I am not on the internet, but friends often call me and share news which appears on it. It is good that I keep informed, but these last few months I am troubled by so much that is on it and how it is phrased. The OCA has a problem, but now I feel that I must take the role of the proverbial babushka and advise all to fight fair. Express your opinions and thoughts in a Christian way. "And Jesus stood in the midst of them and said unto them, peace be unto you."

Matushka Nina

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Legend Has It

...that the candy cane begins with a stick of white candy. The white symbolizes the purity of the Christmas season. Red stripes are for the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that we may have eternal life. The candy cane is formed into a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus. It can also represent the staff of the Good Shepherd. Its hard consistency represents the Solid Rock, the foundation of the church, and the firmness of the promises of God.

Tradition of the Star

The star symbolizes that great light which led the wise men to the Christ child so many years ago. Throughout much of the world, the Christian holiday begins with the appearance of the first star on Christmas Eve. The star also symbolizes hope for peace and good fortune and demonstrates the fact that all people, regardless of their nationality, share the same universe.

Legend Has It

...that the bright red and green of holly make it a natural symbol of rebirth. There are several legends regarding holly. According to one of these legends, holly branches were woven into Christ's crown of thorns. Therefore, the once white berries were stained red by the blood of Christ. Holly has also come to stand for peace and joy.

Tradition of the Candle

Before electric Christmas lights were invented, candles adorned the Christmas tree, sparkling like starlight against the dark green boughs.

The candle reminds us that Christ is the light of the world. Many European families still decorate their Christmas tree with candles that are burned on Christmas Eve.

Undique (from everywhere)

Prayers in the home were important to Jesus. He berated the hypocrites who prayed publicly in the synagogues and on the street corners rather than in the privacy of their homes. (Matthew 6:5).

The first Christians were Jews, so they worshipped along with other Jews in the synagogue. The earliest Gentile converts also attended the same religious services. Even when Christians gathered outside the synagogue, they still read its Scriptures, used its form of liturgy, and preserved the same basic flavor of synagogue worship. Every historic Christian liturgy has followed this same formula. It makes up the first part of the Liturgies of SS. John and Basil in the Orthodox Church with the addition of the celebration of Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples in fulfillment of the Passover and New Covenant "This is My Blood of the New Testament/ Covenant."

Much as we of Slavic background have Bethlehems, an enactment of the Nativity story, the Spanish have Las Posadas (Spanish for "The Inns") which re-enact Mary and Joseph traveling from inn to inn, looking for a place to stay. At each stop people have a different excuse for why they can't respond to God's call. Finally, someone responds, and the baby is born in a stable.

On Christmas Day, the gospel reading is from Matthew 2:1-12 which is not about the birth of Jesus but of the three wise men who came to pay Him homage. This is because the Liturgy is the climax of all the services which have gone on before it. Those who have attended the vespers and compline that preceded the Liturgy have heard the story of the Birth of the Saviour.

Children have become so out of control in some churches that some wonder whether there is a Nanny 911 anywhere around.

We greet each other with: "Christ is born" and respond with: "Glorify Him."

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Христосъ Раждается! Славите Его!

Christos Raždajetsja! Slavite Jeho!



During the year, I have received requests for certain Christmas Eve Supper recipes. I give you a page of them.

STUFFED CABBAGE (HOLUBTSI)

Place one head of cored cabbage in a deep pot of boiling water. Remove the leaves as they soften. Cool and drain the leaves and remove the hard central vein. Put one Tbls. of preferred filling on large part of leaf. Roll, tucking in edges. Grease a casserole or heavy pot. Line with few leaves of cabbage. Arrange filled cabbage rolls in layers, adding some sauteed onion between layers. Place extra cabbage leaves on top to prevent scorching. Pour tomato juice, water or any liquid almost to cover. Cover. Place in 325° oven. Bake for 1 to 2 hours until both cabbage and filling are tender.

RICE FILLING

2 cups rice	4 Tbls. oil
2 cups water	pepper
2 tsp. salt	
1 medium onion, chopped	

Mix rice, water and salt. Bring to boil. Cover, simmer, until rice is just tender. Take off heat, let stand covered until water is absorbed. (Rice will not be fully cooked.) Saute chopped onion in oil. Add to rice. Season to taste. Cool and roll in cabbage.

BUCKWHEAT FILLING

2 cups buckwheat groats	5 Tbls. oil
	4 cups water
2 tsp. salt	
1 medium onion, chopped	

Brown groats very lightly in oven. Carefully pour into pot of boiling salted water. Add 4 Tbls. oil. Cook until water is absorbed. Cover and bake in 350° oven for 30 minutes. After baking, allow to cool. Saute chopped onion in 1 Tbls. oil. Add to cooled, cooked buckwheat. Roll in cabbage.

MA-B'S SPECIAL FILLING

2 cups rice	1 onion
2 cups water	2 green peppers
1 cup mushrooms	
1 can tomatoes, drained	
dash oregano and pepper	
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	
2 Tbls. oil	

FOR SAUCE

1 can tomato soup	2 stalks celery
1 chopped onion	2 Tbls. oil
one clove garlic	salt and pepper

Simmer rice in water until almost tender. Let stand and absorb rest of water. If dried mushrooms are being used, soak in warm water for an hour. Drain. Saute cut-up mushrooms in oil. Remove from pan, add onion and green pepper and more oil if needed. Saute until soft. Add to rice and mushrooms. Drain the tomatoes. Save juice. Chop tomatoes and add with dash of oregano, salt and pepper. Roll in cabbage leaves.

You may use any liquid but Ma-B's Sauce makes these especially gourmet. Mix. Add 1 can tomato soup, the liquid from the tomatoes, chopped onion, one chopped clove garlic, chopped celery stalks, oil and salt and pepper. Pour over holubtsi. Cover and bake 325° for 1-2 hours.

BOBALKI

1 pkg. yeast	6 cups flour
1 tsp. salt	2 cups water (about)
1 Tbls. sugar	
1/2 cup lukewarm water	1 Tbls. sugar
	1/4 cup oil

Dissolve yeast in lukewarm water, add salt and 1 Tbls. sugar. Let set about 10 minutes. Sift flour and sugar into large bowl. Add yeast mixture and rest of ingredients. Knead well. Let rise in warm place until doubled. Punch down. Cut off portions about the size of an egg. Roll out on floured board by hand to make roll about one inch in diameter. Cut into 1 inch pieces. Place on greased cookie sheet. Let rise about 20 minutes. Bake at 350° about 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool and separate. Place in colander, pour boiling water over bobalki. Drain quickly to prevent sogginess. Use any of the following on bobalki.

1. Saute 1 small onion in 2 Tbls. oil. Add 1 lb. washed and drained sauerkraut. Cook about 15 min. Add mixture to half of bobalki.
2. Combine 1 cup ground poppy seeds, 2 Tbls. honey, 4 Tbls. water. Add to remaining bobalki. Mix well.

NOTE: Some people use only half of dough for Bobalki. They use the other half to make loaf of bread.

MUSHROOM SAUERKRAUT SOUP

1 cup dried mushrooms (podpinkie preferred)	
1 cup sauerkraut juice	1 quart water
1 small onion, chopped	salt and pepper
	1 diced potato, (optional)
1 Tbls. flour	

Soak dried mushrooms in cold water overnight or at least 2 hours. Drain and chop. Put into soup pot. Add the 1 quart water, sauerkraut juice and onion. Simmer 2 hours. Add potato now if using. Brown flour in oil in frying pan. Stir constantly or flour will burn, making it bi[illegible] When brown, slowly add 1 cup of soup to pan. Stir constantly to make thin gravy. Add to soup. Simmer 15 minutes. Season to taste. May not need salt.

EASY KUTIA

Boil 1 cup rice according to recipe on box. Add water to honey to dilute. Warm and add poppy seed. Sweeten with sugar to taste. Place in bowl and decorate with almonds or raisins, if desired. This is made either with wheat berries, purchased in a health food store, or with rice.

BORSCH

1 cup mushrooms, dried or fresh
3 cups shredded cabbage
1 large onion
1/2 cup tomato juice
3 Tbls. oil
can beets
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 cup diced carrots
1 potato, diced
9 cups water
1/2 tsp. dill
lemon juice, to taste
salt and pepper
tsp. parsley
2 Tbls. dry onion soup, optional

Saute mushrooms in oil. Place in soup pot with carrots, onion, potato, parsley and dill. Add dried onion soup, if using. Cover with water and simmer until barely tender. Add cabbage and cook until just soft. Add beets (saving liquid) which have been sliced into strips, tomato juice, salt and pepper. Taste, add lemon juice until tart but not sour. Bring to boil. Add reserved beet juice. Adding beet juice at end let's borsch retain its red color.

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BIBLE STUDY

Right at the beginning of his first letter to Timothy, St. Paul gives the immediate reason for Timothy being placed permanently over the Church at Ephesus, namely, that he might check those teachers who insisted that the Christians observe the Mosaic law, and to pay attention even to the frivolous traditions which the Jewish Rabbis had added to the Law. After an outburst of thanksgiving to God's mercy shown to himself in calling him to be an Apostle, St. Paul reiterates his charge to Timothy to discharge faithfully the trust committed to him.

The two Epistles to Timothy, along with the Epistle to Titus, are called the Pastoral Epistles, as they are addressed to the two bishops of the church and are chiefly directions for the governance of the Church and the cure of souls. Our readings this month are mostly taken from these Epistles.

The Christians over whom Timothy was placed were the citizens of a rich and sophisticated city; while those of whom Titus had charge, lived in the scarcely civilized island of Crete. However, we note that the same episcopal government and three-fold ministry was constituted in both places. Did the Apostles envision this to be the constitution of the Church everywhere?

Who was Timothy? It appears that he was the offspring of a mixed marriage. His father was Greek, his mother a Jewess. By studying diverse verses, we gather that he was of a delicate constitution, of ascetic habits, of a deeply sensitive and affectionate disposition, and naturally inclined to shrink from opposition. Brought up in Lystra, he probably witnessed the miraculous cure of the lame man, the attempted sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, and the subsequent stoning of the Apostles (Acts 14). St. Paul cites him as a witness to his sufferings in that neighborhood (2 Tim 3:10,11); and it is likely that these sufferings may have had among other results the conversion of his "own son in the faith." It appears from Hebrews 13:23 that Timothy, himself, suffered imprisonment at an earlier period in his life; and he is recorded to have died as a martyr at the hands of a mob during the celebration at the pagan festival of Artemis.

Unlike Timothy, Titus was a convert from paganism. He was of unmixed Gentile parentage. He was the companion of St. Paul on his journey to Jerusalem to attend the first Apostolic Council (Gal 2:1-3). He was given the task of going to the Corinthian Church to discuss with them the immoralities so sternly censured in the first letter to them and in regard to the collection of alms for the poor Christians in Judea. He reported back to the Apostles that the First Epistle to them had produced the desired effect and that he had delivered the second letter to them.

He was appointed Bishop of Crete. St. Paul's Epistle to him written in the autumn of '67 was written between the first and second letter to Timothy.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

DECEMBER 2006

1. 2 Thess 3:6-18
2. Gal 1:3-10
3. **Eph 4:1-6**
4. 1 Tim 1:1-7
5. 1 Tim 1:8-14
6. 1 Tim 1:18-20, 2:8-15
7. 1 Tim 3:1-13
8. 1 Tim 4:4-8, 16
9. Gal 3:8-12
10. **Eph 5:9-19**
11. 1 Tim 5:1-10
12. 1 Tim 5:11-21
13. 1 Tim 5:22-6:11
14. 1 Tim 6:17-21
15. 2 Tim 1:1-2,8-18
16. Gal 5:22-6:2
17. **Col 3:4-11**
18. 2 Tim 2:20-26
19. 2 Tim 3:16-4:4
20. 2 Tim 4:9-22
21. Titus 1:5-2:1
22. Titus 1:15-2:10
23. Gal 3:8-12
24. **Col 1:12-18**
25. Heb 3:5-10, 17-19
26. Heb 4:1-13
27. Heb 5:11-6:8
28. Heb 7:1-6
29. Heb 7:18-25
30. 1 Tim 6:11-16
31. **2 Tim 4:5-8**

LIGHTER MOMENT

A man went to see his doctor. The doctor asked him if there was anything unusual he should know about.

"Well," the man replied, "I find it strange how my Sunday suit has shrunk just sitting in the closet. I tried it on to go to a wedding, it just didn't fit."

Suits don't shrink just sitting there," the doctor replied. "You probably have put on more than a few pounds."

"That's just it, Doc. I know that I haven't gained a single pound since the last time I wore it. That's what got me worried."

"Well, then," said the doctor, "you must have a case of furniture disease."

"What in the world is furniture disease? Is it serious?"

"It's when you reach that stage in life when your chest starts sliding down into your drawers."